

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SAJ-01 BIB-01 /066 W
-----260138Z 044565 /71

R 260111Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9144
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 02501

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PINT' UR
SUBJECT: THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS (PCF) AND THE TWENTIETH
CONGRESS (CPSU) OR, STALIN'S DEAD BUT HIS SONG LINGERS
ON

1. PRESENTING THE PCF VIEW: ON JANUARY 13 HUMANITE
(PCF DAILY) OFFERED SOMEWHAT STARTLED READERS ITS COM-
MENTS ON THE ISSUE OF PRIOR PCF KNOWLEDGE OF KHRUSHCHEV'S
FAMOUS "SECRET SPEECH" TO THE TWENTIETH CPSU CONGRESS
(1956). TAKING SHARP ISSUES WITH DECLARATIONS (LE MONDE,
DECEMBER 30 AND DECEMBER 31) BY PCF HISTORIAN JEAN
ELLEINSTEIN THAT THE PCF DELEGATION TO THE CONGRESS HAD
HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPEECH, THE PARTY PLEADED
IGNORANCE AND ARGUED THAT IT HAD ONLY BEEN GIVEN A
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RUSSIAN TEXT A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE SPEECH WAS ACTUALLY
GIVEN. IT HAD NOT, THEREFORE, BEEN ABLE TO MEASURE
THE IMPORT OF WHAT IT HAD BEEN GIVEN AND IT WAS THERE-
FORE ABLE TO TAKE NO MEANINGFUL ACTION ON THE MATTER.

2. THE ISSUES: AT STAKE IN THE CONTROVERSY IS THE LEGIT-
IMACY OF THE PCF'S DRIVE TO CONVINCE FRENCH VOTERS THAT

IT HAS COME AWAY FROM ITS STALINIST PAST. THE PCF IS CAUGHT IN A BIND OF ITS OWN MAKING: IT CAN NEITHER MAKE A CLEAN BREAK WITH ITS PAST AND OPENLY ADMIT THAT ITS STALINISM WAS A TERRIBLE ERROR NOR CAN IT AFFORD TO BE LINKED IN ANY WAY TO A PAST WHICH IT WOULD SIMPLY LIKE TO SEE DISAPPEAR. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE ENTIRE CONTROVERSY REOPENS THE QUESTION OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES WITHIN THE PARTY: ELLEINSTEIN HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED ONE OF THE PARTY'S MOST OUTSPOKEN LIBERALS (IN HIS RECENT CAMPAIGN FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT IN PARIS' FIFTH ARRONDISSEMENT, ELLEINSTEIN WENT SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST, IN THE VERY BEST ITALIAN STYLE, THAT THE EXISTENCE OF NATO COULD BE A USEFUL COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE WARSAW PACT) AND THE PCF'S ATTEMPTS TO GET OUT FROM UNDER HIS ACCUSATIONS ARE BEING CAREFULLY HEDGED SO AS NOT TO APPEAR TO BE A PERSONAL ATTACK ON THE MAN. THE PCF WANTS NO PURGES WHICH MIGHT PROVE EMBARRASSING OR WHICH MIGHT RECALL TO VOTERS THE "GARAUDY PURGE" OF 1968.

3. SOME EXPLANATIONS: WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM OR DENY THE VARIOUS SCENARIOS OFFERED BELOW, BUT PCF WATCHERS -- AND SOME PCF SECOND-AND-THIRD-LEVEL OFFICIALS -- HAVE OFFERED US THE FOLLOWING "EXPLANATIONS". THESE THEORIES DO NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION OF WHY THE PCF REMAINED SILENT ON THE KHRUSHCHEV SPEECH FOR YEARS AFTER ITS PUBLICATION IN THE WESTERN PRESS. THE PCF MAY BE HOPING THAT DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE TECHNICAL POINT OF TIMING AND TRANSLATION MAY DIVERT THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION FROM THE MORE EMBARRASSING POINT OF ITS CONTINUED CONFIDENTIAL

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SILENCE.

-- STUNG BY CHARGES MADE DURING THE "SCREEN FILES" TV SHOW (SEE PARIS 976) THAT THE PCF KNEW OF AND TOLERATED STALINISM'S WORST EXCESSES, THE PARTY HAS DECIDED TO COUNTER-ATTACK INDIRECTLY BY CLAIMING THAT HAD IT BEEN ABLE TO REACT HAD IT BEEN GIVEN THE KNOWLEDGE CONTAINED IN THE SECRET SPEECH, IT WOULD HAVE PRESSED FOR AN END TO THESE PRACTICES;

-- A SECOND THEORY SUGGESTS THAT WE ARE IN FACT WATCHING A VICTORY OF THE HARD-LINERS. THOSE WHO HOLD THIS THEORY SUGGEST THAT THE LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL ELLEINSTEIN REPORT (MARCH, 1976; COLLOQUIUM OF THE SLAVIC INSTITUTE OF PARIS ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KHRUSHCHEV SPEECH), THEIR SUBSEQUENT RE-APPEARANCE IN LE MONDE (DEC, 1976) AND THE PARTY'S RIPOSTE ARGUES FOR A CENTRAL COMMITTEE, POLI-

BURO OR SECRETARIAT DECISION TO IGNORE THE ISS-
UE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. IN THIS SCENARIO, THE
PARTY'S HARD-LINERS, WHO HAVE LONG BEEN LOOKING

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FOR A WHIP WITH WHICH TO CHASTISE ELLEINSTEIN,
FINALLY FOUND IT;

-- FINALLY, WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT THE MARCHAIS
"TEAM" VIEWED THE HUMANITE EDITORIAL AS A WAY
TO BUILD ON ELLEINSTEIN'S ORIGINAL DEMARCHE.
THIS VIEW HOLDS THAT THE PCF STANDS TO GAIN
FROM THE TRIPLE-HEADED "DENUNCIATION" OF STALIN-
ISM BY SHOWING ITS GOOD FAITH THROUGH LETTING
KANAPA TALK, THROUGH MAKING ITS DENIAL AND
THROUGH GIVING THE "TRUE" VERSION OF THE TIMING
WE FIND THIS EXPLANATION DISINGENUOUS, BUT NOTE
IT FOR THE RECORD.

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4. THE MOSCOW CONNECTION -- THERE ISN'T ONE: ALL OBSERVERS SO FAR HAVE INDICATED THEIR BELIEF THAT THE ENTIRE OPERATION SHOULD BE VIEWED UNIQUELY THROUGH THE OPTIC OF FRENCH AND PCF INTERNAL POLITICS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT THE EXERCISE MAY RAISE HACKLES IN MOSCOW, SOME OBSERVERS APPEAR TO FEEL THAT THE SOVIET REACTION, WERE THERE TO BE ONE, WOULD HAVE COME LAST SUMMER WHEN THE ELLENSTEIN PAPERS WERE ORIGINALLY PRESENTED. THE FACT THAT THE ISSUE HAS GONE ON FOR THIS LONG, AND HAS TAKEN SO LITTLE PUBLIC ATTENTION SUGGESTS, THAT THE PCF DOES NOT EXPECT A HARD MOSCOW REACTION. WE ARE LESS SURE OF THE IMPORT OF MOSCOW'S SILENCE AND WOULD WELCOME ANY LIGHT WHICH ADDRESSEES CAN SHED.

RUSH

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